



# Planting seeds with historically black colleges and universities

September 1, 2018

Building a better path to employment at the Laboratory for African American STEM graduates is a long-term job, but it's one that Michelle Lee is happy to take on.

"We're planting seeds here," says Lee, program manager of the [Research on the Science & Engineering of Signatures \(RoSES\) program](#) – a consortium of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) with national laboratories, created to build research collaborations and expand opportunities for HBCU STEM students.

With African Americans [representing 1% of the current workforce](#) at the Laboratory, the aim is to create a pipeline for talented people that will increase that number. This year, the Laboratory hosted 12 student interns through the program over the summer, with six students on year-round internships. The interns come from Alabama A&M University, Alcorn State University, Delaware State University, and Morehouse College.

RoSES intern Jacori Small attends Delaware State University.

## "Different, but good different"

Jacori Small from Delaware State is one of the interns who has just finished their summer placement, where she worked on biosecurity and public health topics. "It was a culture shock at first - so many things are different here, but it's good different," she says. "It's been great getting the chance to work hands-on on things I'd only studied in textbooks, and to see the range of the work the Laboratory does."

Lee herself came to Los Alamos first in 1991 as an undergraduate student. In addition to her work with the RoSES program, she is currently a program lead in the Laboratory's radiation protection programs group, and also a student mentor and technical recruiter.

"Outreach is important to me because a similar outreach program gave me an opportunity to learn about and work at the Laboratory. I like to extend those opportunities to others," she says.

RoSES, which is funded by the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), is part of the NNSA's [Minority Serving Institution Partnership Program](#), which currently involves 39 HBCUs and eight Department of Energy sites (including Los Alamos National Laboratory) in STEM education and internships initiatives.

Michelle Lee works with students from Pre-college Science and Math Program during their two-day program at Los Alamos.

## K-12 outreach

An additional objective of the RoSES program is K-12 outreach education. The interns aim to reach out and inspire New Mexico African American and other minority young people to pursue STEM disciplines and see themselves working as scientists and professionals at the Laboratory in the future.

As part of this outreach, this year students from Nambé Pueblo and the Albuquerque-based Pre-college Science and Math Program attended a two-day program including lectures, tours and hands-on science activities.

"The rewarding part of this program for me is planning and coordinating activities and watching students' interactions during the experience," says Lee. She might be planting seeds, but some of them are beginning to bloom: this year, one of the RoSES students has been hired on at the Laboratory full-time.

**Los Alamos National Laboratory**

**[www.lanl.gov](http://www.lanl.gov)**

**(505) 667-7000**

**Los Alamos, NM**

Managed by Triad National Security, LLC for the U.S Department of Energy's NNSA

